

**Montana Board of Oil and Gas Conservation
Environmental Assessment**

Operator: Interstate Explorations, LLC
Well Name/Number: Nelson 16-1
Location: SESE Section 29 T14N R60E
County: Wibaux, MT; **Field (or Wildcat)** W/C

Air Quality

(possible concerns)

Long drilling time: 20-25 days drilling time for a vertical Red River Formation test.
Unusually deep drilling (high horsepower rig): No, large triple drilling rig for a 12,000' TD vertical Red River Formation test.

Possible H₂S gas production: Yes possible, H₂S gas from Mississippian, Devonian Silurian and Ordovician Formations.

In/near Class I air quality area: No Class I air quality area.

Air quality permit for flaring/venting (if productive): Yes, DEQ air quality permit required under 75-2-211.

Mitigation:

- ☒ Air quality permit (AQB review)
- ☐ Gas plants/pipelines available for sour gas
- ☐ Special equipment/procedures requirements
- ☐ Other: _____

Comments: No special concerns, adequate surface casing, 2000' to be set and cemented back to surface, Rule 36.22.1001. Proper BOP stack should mitigate any concerns (5000 psig Double ram and annular preventer), Rule 36.22.1014. Triple rig to drill a 12,000' TD vertical Red River Formation test. If well is successful and there are existing pipelines for natural gas in the area. Then associated gas must be tied into gathering system or if no gathering system nearby associated gas can be flared under Board Rule 36.22.1220.

Water Quality

(possible concerns)

Salt/oil based mud: Use freshwater and freshwater mud system on surface hole, Rule 36.22.1001. Invert oil based mud for mainhole from the base of surface casing to TD.

High water table: No high water table expected.

Surface drainage leads to live water: No, nearest is an ephemeral drainage, about 3/8 of a mile to the south, an unnamed ephemeral tributary to Beaver Creek..

Water well contamination: No, closest water wells are about 3/4 mile to the south, depth of these stock and domestic wells are about 100'. Surface hole will be drilled with freshwater and steel surface casing set and cemented from 2000' to protect surface waters and the Fox Hill aquifer, Rule 36.22.1001.

Porous/permeable soils: No, sandy clay soils.

Class I stream drainage: No, Class I stream drainages in the area.

Mitigation:

- ☒ Lined reserve pit
- ☒ Adequate surface casing
- ☐ Berms/dykes, re-routed drainage
- ☐ Closed mud system
- ☐ Off-site disposal of solids/liquids (in approved facility)

Other: _____
Comments: 2000' of surface casing cemented to surface adequate to protect freshwater zones, Rule 36.22.1001. Also, fresh water mud systems to be used on surface hole, Rule 36.22.1001.

Soils/Vegetation/Land Use

(possible concerns)

Stream crossings: No stream crossings anticipated.

High erosion potential: No – moderate cut/fill, up to 8' cut 11' fill required for this location pad.

Loss of soil productivity: No, location will be restored after drilling, if nonproductive. If productive unused portion of drillsite will be reclaimed.

Unusually large wellsite: Large, 400'X430' location size required.

Damage to improvements: Slight, surface use is cultivated land.

Conflict with existing land use/values: Slight.

Mitigation

☐ Avoid improvements (topographic tolerance)

☐ Exception location requested

☒ Stockpile topsoil

☐ Stream Crossing Permit (other agency review)

☒ Reclaim unused part of wellsite if productive

☐ Special construction methods to enhance reclamation

Other: _____.

Comments: Access will be over existing county road – Yates road and Custer Trail. Will build about 6141' of new access road into this location. Pits will be lined with a synthetic 16 mil pit liner. Invert based oil drilling fluid will be recycled. Completion fluids will be hauled to a permitted commercial Class II disposal. Solids will be allowed to dry in the lined reserve pit and then backfilled. Topsoil will be spread and seeded to vegetation per landowner specification. No special concerns

Health Hazards/Noise

(possible concerns)

Proximity to public facilities/residences: Closest residences are about a mile to the northwest The town of Wibaux, Montana is about 4.5 miles to the North.

Possibility of H2S: Yes small amounts of H2S possible from the Mississippian, Devonian, Silurian and Ordovician Formations.

Size of rig/length of drilling time: Triple drilling rig 20 to 25 days drilling time.

Mitigation:

☒ Proper BOP equipment

☐ Topographic sound barriers

☐ H2S contingency and/or evacuation plan

☐ Special equipment/procedures requirements

☒ Other: Standard for the area H2S safety equipment and training for rig crews.

Comments: No concerns. Proper BOP stack (5,000 psig double ram and annular prevent, Rule 36.22.1014) and adequate surface casing should be able to control any problems that occur. Distance to nearest residence and H2S safety plan sufficient to mitigate any concerns for H2S.

Wildlife/recreation

(possible concerns)

Proximity to sensitive wildlife areas (DFWP identified): None identified.

Proximity to recreation sites: None identified.

Creation of new access to wildlife habitat: No

Conflict with game range/refuge management: No

Threatened or endangered Species: Species identified as threatened or endangered by USFWS are the Pallid Sturgeon, Interior Least Tern and the Whooping Crane.

Species of concern is the Greater Sage Grouse and the Sprague's Pipit. NH tracker website lists the only one (1) species of concern as the Great Blue Heron.

Mitigation:

Avoidance (topographic tolerance/exception)

Other agency review (DFWP, federal agencies, DSL)

Screening/fencing of pits, drillsite

Other: _____

Comments: Private cultivated surface lands. Not close to live water. There may be species of concern that maybe impacted by this wellsite. We ask the operator to consult with the surface owner as to what he would like done, if a species of concern is discovered at this location. The Board of Oil & Gas has no jurisdiction over private surface lands.

Historical/Cultural/Paleontological

(possible concerns)

Proximity to known sites: None identified

Mitigation

avoidance (topographic tolerance, location exception)

other agency review (SHPO, DSL, federal agencies)

Other:

Comments: Private cultivated surface lands. There may be species of concern that maybe impacted by this wellsite. We ask the operator to consult with the surface owner as to what he would like done, if a species of concern is discovered at this location. The Board of Oil & Gas has no jurisdiction over private surface lands.

Social/Economic

(possible concerns)

Substantial effect on tax base

Create demand for new governmental services

- Population increase or relocation

Comments: Wildcat well. No concerns.

Remarks or Special Concerns for this site

Well is a 12,000' TD vertical Red River Formation test.

Summary: Evaluation of Impacts and Cumulative effects

No long term impact expected. Some short term impacts will occur.

I conclude that the approval of the subject Notice of Intent to Drill (does/**does not**) constitute a major action of state government significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, and (does/**does not**) require the preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Prepared by (BOGC) Thomas Richmond
(title:) Administrator
Date: September 20, 2013

Other Persons Contacted:

Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, GWIC website

(Name and Agency)

Area water wells

(subject discussed)

September 20, 2013

(date)

MT Cadastral website

(Name and Agency)

Aerial Photo, topo map, ownership

(subject discussed)

September 20, 2013

(date)

Montana Natural Heritage Program Website (FWP)

(Name and Agency)

Heritage State Rank= S1, S2, S3, T19N R56E

(subject discussed)

September 20, 2013

(date)

If location was inspected before permit approval:

Inspection date: _____

Inspector: _____

Others present during inspection: _____